

# Unknown People in the Movie World

## Field Secretary. Location Finder, et al, Are Neces- sary to Success of Pictures.

**W**HAT has happened to the moving picture industry lately?

People who have not been identified in the public mind with production development and of whom theatergoers have known little or nothing are gradually being brought forward out of the seclusion to which they were consigned and are beginning to

to have in mind just the spot or building that the script calls for, and lead the director and company to it at the moment the "shot" is called for.

One of the most pronounced successes made in this particular sphere of motion picture production belongs to Miss Elizabeth Eyre, who discovered her penchant for picking out photographic "tid bits" while following screen companies as an "extra."

Miss Eyre determined to abandon all desire to see her shadow-self on the screen and managed to interest a producing company in herself to the extent that she was employed as "field secretary," a task that called for little attainments beyond the ability to keep notes of the open air scenes "shot" and the order in which they were taken. She was given the opportunity to read advance "scripts" of productions contem-

tion of historical romances and her unique ability to create original designs for modern productions has placed her in the forefront of creators of costumes for the film. In nearly every important production will be found a Shirley Barker color scheme of costuming, and while theatergoers rave about the beauty of the creations they see in the picture none for a moment imagines that they are all the result of long thought out work of a frail little woman whose name does not appear on the screen.

Sometimes, as in the case of the production of a "Dorothy Vernon" romance or a screen play like the Dumas romance of "The Three Musketeers," with the incident of the Queen's necklace enlarged upon, as many as 300 distinct designs would have to be made by Miss Barker, each design in colors made accu-

ner pictures are edited into their final form more often than they are so written. The editor has two functions, both of which are of nearly equal importance. One is the editing of the picture itself, so that by judicious trimming, rearrangement and the like the effect intended by the author or producer may be more completely realized; the other is the titling of the picture. Starting with the knowledge that a title is a foreign substance incorporated into a work of pictorial content, the primary object of the editor must be to make every title so blend into the pictorial drama or narrative that it becomes a harmonious part of the whole work.

Lesley Mason, one of the best title editors in the industry, says the title must agree in tempo and spirit with its pictorial subject. It must not be overwritten (a common fault in times past), it must continue the flow of the picture instead of interrupting it as many titles do.

### The Woman Picture Cutter.

The woman cutter must know every angle of the story that has been filmed, must know the places where the "shots" have been taken and have a full knowledge of drama and comedy so as to keep the swing of interest going at a regular pace from beginning to end.

The industry has women exclusively engaged in location finding, house finding, designing and film editing departments, but perhaps one of the most important of all is the "furniture finder." What the others do for natural, original and material, progress of the picture in its development the "furniture finder" accomplishes for accuracy of the settings. This is more of a man's job than a woman's, though the judgment of the woman is looked for and depended upon in the selection of furnishing materials, no matter of what period. An important factor in this sphere of activity is the "property master." He is the purveyor to the public taste in artistic effects. The director may change the script, but the furnishings, atmosphere and accuracy of detail are all determined by the "property master"; he is the final arbiter of what is correct in his capacity as an expert of what is artistically correct and in good taste.

As a rule directors are not infallible, and the most expert avail themselves of the knowledge that the well equipped and authoritative property man has stored away regarding period furniture and works of art. Many a good picture has been spoiled by the introduction into a scene calling for an absolute Colonial atmosphere of mid-Victorian furniture, and light fixtures instead of candelabra.

In the early days of picture production, any sort of furniture seemed correct. Old English morning scenes were photographed with footmen in nondescript livery serving the guests at refectory tables seated on gilt cane bottomed chairs. Much of the furniture was papier machie reproductions, now happily a thing of the past, as all producers nowadays make some attempt to get the real article, or at least a faithful reproduction in solid wood.

### Research of Property Man.

The property man or a woman assistant is to be found daily in the quaint furniture stores of the city. Furniture lofts of large buyers of antique furniture are the places to

visit for anything from a Jacobean dining room suite to a mid-Victorian bedstead.

For knowledge of period furniture the court of last resort is the library of Edward Siedle, the veteran stage director of the Metropolitan Opera House, where anything in the way of furniture or decoration ever devised or designed from pre-Ptolemaic times to the present can be found in the rare books of the library. Many of these books are priceless and cannot be obtained in the public library. Mr. Siedle has a young lady "draughtsman," Miss Helen Klaffky, who with pencil, rule, brushes and color can reproduce to a scale any period suite of furniture or odd piece required.

### Feminine Press Agents.

Another place that woman has created for herself in the moving picture industry is that of press agent for the women stars. The art of securing publicity for such artists as Norma and Constance Talmadge, two of the most prominent of the successful screen players, has its strenuous aspect in these days when the picture industry is emerging from its hectic and hilarious chrysalis into full fledged art. Women publicity agents, such as are personified by Beulah Livingstone, are lending to picture exploitation rhythmic heartbeats—the men gave the industry the fullest and freest lung expansion long ago—as well as greater dignity, and the human touch.

To her particular star employer the woman exploiter is an adviser and guide as well as the chronicler of the transient record of public opinion concerning her activities—in fact, the actual work of writing paragraphs and squibs is the smallest part of the day's work. There are pictures to be taken every month or so. A star must be constantly seen in new clothes and new poses if her publicity agent is to keep the same name before the public constantly.

Sometimes a star has to be taken to five or six different photographers before she succeeds in getting just exactly the right pose to please herself—not necessarily the press agent. Answering letters from exhibitors, demands for pictures, autographs and "polite touches" is a small item of the duties imposed on the star's vocabulary, for all sensible inquiries and letters of intelligent criticism are answered promptly. Another important duty is to watch the screen story that is being produced, in the process of making, so as to get good publicity angles in advance of its release. Many hours are spent in the studio observing the stars and their directors at work, and some of the best material for newspaper and magazine articles is gathered in this way.

Beulah Livingstone believes that women are particularly suited to publicity work; their tact and their intuitive understanding of human nature are great assets in dealing with the artistic temperaments of such artists as a Petrova and Nazimova.

The woman press agent owes much of her prestige to such prominent stars as Mme. Olga Petrova, Miss Margaret Anglin, Mrs. Fiske and Mme. Nazimova, who were the pioneers to bring the newspaper woman into the dramatic limelight.



Miss Ruth Oehman, Location Finder.

Miss Mary Hunt, Field Secretary.

receive credit for their share in providing entertainment for the masses of lovers of the silent drama.

And the accomplishments of these unseen, unknown workers are manifest in every production of a moving picture, great or small.

### Who Is Really Responsible?

Following the flash of the title of the production the public has gleaned information regarding the author, the director and the photographer, but mention is not made of those responsible for the real effects—costuming, correct settings and beauty of outdoor scenes—a mass of detail that has been brought to perfection by experts, often unknown to the star or cast of players, who have worked hard and quietly for weeks to make the production possible.

The majority of these unheard of experts are young women who have ventured into the technical fields of motion picture production work instead of acting. Many are beautiful enough to "register" and prove successful as screen stars, but they have preferred to plod along without the glamour of screen publicity in their chosen vocations of "location finders," "furniture experts" and "costume designers."

The "location finder" is one of the most important persons in the industry. She has to be forever motoring about the country, seeking out hidden natural beauty spots of woodland, meadowland, shady lanes, rippling brooks, craggy dells, picturesquely situated homes, romantic appearing cottages and ivy clad churches, which she snaps and keeps a record of.

The "location finder" is forever seeking the primeval in natural beauty of the great outdoors and the artistically unusual in town and country home life.

She does not know what moment a director will call for a Norman exterior, a Colonial manse, a Georgian ballroom, an Italian garden setting or a Gothic church interior for a wedding. Original settings are the order of the day in the new scheme of moving picture production, and it is the duty of the "location finder"

plated, and, noting what was needed in the way of exteriors, she went ahead and located outdoor scenes that fitted in with the trend of the screen story. Her natural love for the great outdoors, a landscape eye and the ability to ride horseback and drive a car took her into the most unfrequented places where the camera had never been—places which provided just the scenes that were wanted by directors looking for the unusual.

Perhaps Miss Eyre showed the most original aptitude in the selection of country estates with romantic surroundings for screen love stories, though she has a close second in Miss Maude Ethel Jones, a member of an old New York family, who knows much about the interiors of country homes possessing ideal rooms that are at once stately and dignified for interior "shots."

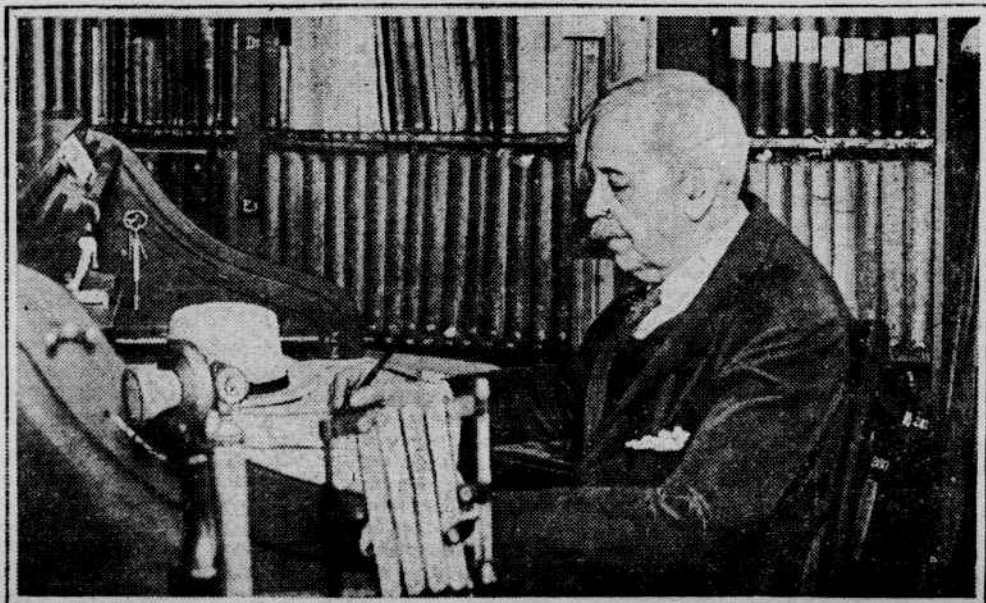
While Miss Eyre knows all about exteriors endowed with a wealth of natural beauty, Miss Jones has at her finger tips the names of estates and owners, with a detailed description of the interiors that are just what people look for in romance, comedy or tragedy. Having a wide acquaintance, Miss Jones seldom is refused the privilege of shooting the interior of some exclusive country house, though the work has to be done thoroughly and expeditiously so as to give the least possible inconvenience to the owner.

### Designer of Costumes.

One of the most important tasks that devolve exclusively on young women is the designing of indoor and outdoor costumes that will not only harmonize with the settings, but will be made of materials and colors that will stand out in the picture. All costuming for pictures is termed "special costuming," and in this particular picture craft Miss Shirley Barker is successful. Miss Barker was born in the West and started her career as a designer of costumes for the Bernhardt production of Queen Elizabeth, which was one of the most faithful historical screen plays ever produced. Her work commanded instant attention; her gift for harmony of treatment and accuracy of detail in the produc-

tion of scale so that the actual amount of material necessary, what the various material cost a yard and what the making of the costume will cost, are all prepared months in advance. When the actual date of making the picture is decided upon Miss Barker calls for the services of half a hundred seamstresses, a large hall is rented and the work of making the costumes is hurried along, the members of the company engaged for the production being fitted completely weeks before the first shot has been taken.

When the picture has been cut sufficiently for the assembling of titles the editor and cutter sit in again and watch the film as it is projected slowly, the places where the titles are to go being noted. It is then left entirely in the hands of the woman cutter and assembler, her work with relation to a production being very much like the work of the stage manager with reference to an accepted play. "Plays," said Clyde Fitch, "are not written; they are rewritten." In the same man-



Edward Siedle in His Reference Library in Metropolitan Opera House